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a convention is absolutely bound by the restrictions that the state legislature chose to impose upon it.

Mr. Dodd says: "As a rule, then, constitutional conventions are subject only to the following restrictions: (1) those contained in or implied from provisions in the existing state and federal constitutions, and (2) in the absence of constitutional provisions, those derived or implied from the limited functions of conventions" (p. 92). Many would consider his doctrine too conservative.

The judicial cases upon the subject are nowhere so well collected as in Mr. Dodd's book. It is interesting to note, as a sign of the tendency of thought among the rising generation of scholars, that he is strongly opposed to the judicial usurpation by the courts of some of our states in asserting the right to act as third legislative chambers and to set aside, upon general principles, laws which they disapprove, but which clearly do not violate any constitutional inhibition.

Not the least valuable part of the book is a collection of the cases in which the people have overruled such decisions by constitutional amendments (pp. 238-240).

Should a new edition be called for, the index might well be enlarged by inserting references to the mentions in the text of Borgeaud, Judge Hand, Judge Jameson, Judge Lobingier, and the Constitution of Mexico. It seems ungracious, however, to find fault with such an excellent piece of work.

ROGER FOSTER.

The Intimate Life of Alexander Hamilton. Based chiefly upon Original Family Letters and other Documents, many of which have never been published. By ALLAN McLANE HAMILTON. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1910. Pp. xii, 483.)

WHETHER we admire or condemn Hamilton's ideas we must like his personality. He was one of the gifted men of his day, a genius born to greatness in whatever field he entered. He was a precocious boy who justified the promise of his youth. Ideas formed themselves readily in his mind, and he had both the industry and inclination to announce them to the public. In his earliest age they have the marks of maturity. He entered life at a time most favorable for a man of his capacity, when society was being remade and a self-made man was least likely to be embarrassed by the lack of conventionalities. And yet he was the genius of the old, not through affectation but through conviction. He believed in capable government and in a society in which conservatism ruled. He gave to the new régime that balance which it needed to restrain its tendency to experimentation, and he had the necessary ability to impose his purpose on a people who were a little too prone to ignore the permanent things of life. His activity in these lines can never be underestimated. They have many times been described in biographies and in histories.

The task of the present biographer, who is a grandson, is to describe the rich and active personality which was behind this wonderful sum of achievement. Private correspondence, the loving testimony of friends and relatives, and official records have been drawn upon for material, and the information discovered has been digested with care and arranged with a pleasing sense of proportion. The result, as may be expected, partakes somewhat of the apologetic, but it shows an honest intention to be truthful. It is hard for any man to write about Hamilton without being captivated by his genius: it is not to be expected that a relative should be aught but an admirer. We must not, therefore, be surprised to find warmest commendation for the opinions of Oliver, the Englishman, who has little appreciation for the purposes of such men as Jefferson and Gallatin, and who does not understand the native Americanism in the Republican party of the time. But all this we may forget in the faithful description of the man.

Dr. Hamilton, well known as an alienist of pre-eminent ability, proves himself a skilful narrator. His chapters deal with such subjects as Origin and Parentage; Courtship and Marriage; Hamilton as a Lawyer; As a Writer and Orator; Friends and Enemies; Building a Home; Family Life; Hamilton and Burr; and the Duel. There is also in a separate chapter a pleasing view of Mrs. Hamilton. The quotations from letters add a scholarly touch to the description and preserve the quaintness of the time in which they were written. They are not numerous enough to become wearisome, although the repetition of the prevalent epistolary affectation of style makes the reader glad no more are given. Hamilton's domestic life is the most persistent note in the volume, a wholesome picture of upper-class family happiness. The chapters on Burr and the duel are perhaps the most impressive. They describe this tragic affair not fully but with effect. Dr. Hamilton does not think it worth while to interrupt the story to explain the bearing of the New York election of 1804 on the duel. Was it because that election had a connection with the projects of the Essex Junto? On all the points which have been cited with most telling effect against Hamilton the book is mostly silent. It is not critical, or philosophical, but only a very appreciative presentation of the man's human side, sometimes diffuse and sometimes incomplete, but on the whole satisfying and creditable.

JOHN S. BASSETT.

The National Land System, 1785-1820. By PAYSON JACKSON TREAT, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History, Leland Stanford Junior University. (New York: E. B. Treat and Company. 1910. Pp. xii, 486.)

FEW attempts have been made to put into compact form a history of the American federal land system. Donaldson's encyclopaedic *Public Domain* is an excellent reference work but not attractive reading. Sato's *History of the Land Question in the United States* is little more than a